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the understanding of what he calls "indiscutiblemente el príncipe de nuestros libros picarescos"—Guzmán de Alfarache. Indirectly the discourse furnishes an interesting comparison between the lives and characters of Alemán and Cervantes.

The book also contains the discourse of Sr. Menéndez Pelayo in answer to that of Sr. Rodríguez Marín. It is published by Francisco de P. Díaz, Plaza de Alfonso XIII. 6 and is for sale in the Madrid bookstores. Price two pesetas.

ALICE H. BUSHEE.

CARLYLE'S *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*.

*To the Editors of Mod. Lang. Notes.*

SIRS:—Carlyle's translation of Goethe's work appeared in May, 1824, and several of the British magazines contain reviews of it in their August or September numbers, most of them being far from eulogistic in tone. In fact, the narrow, petty view which English critics took at that time of German literature is almost ludicrous. Think of a reputable critic saying of Goethe's *Faust* that—"on the whole, the absurdities of this piece are so numerous, the obscenities are so frequent, the profaneness is so gross, and the beauties are so exclusively adapted for German relish, that we cannot conscientiously recommend its importation, and still less the translation of it, to our English students of German literature!"<sup>1</sup> Some fifteen years later the literary critic of the same magazine suggests that it would have pleased his English readers better if Carlyle had omitted from his translation of *Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre* the passage describing Wilhelm's adoration of the fair Mariana.<sup>2</sup> In contrast to such criticism the present writer would call attention to what seems to be the earliest public praise of Carlyle's translation, as the criticism is dated "July 31, 1824." It is found in the little publication called *The Drama; or Theatrical Pocket Magazine*, vol. 6, pp. 375 ff., and reads as follows:

<sup>1</sup> *The Monthly Review* (1810), vol. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Book I, chap. xvii. On this point compare Carlyle's defence in the "Translator's Preface to the First Edition of *Wilhelm Meister*."

"It certainly has been with no little pleasure that I have lately perused a work, translated from Goethe, the title of which is "*Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*," and which I most strongly recommend to the lovers of the drama, as containing more real knowledge and a deeper insight into that noble art, than any work which for a long time has appeared in this country.

"German literature has been unknown to us, excepting in those tales of horror which form so large a portion of the works of all their authors; and the authors themselves seem to be lost upon us, if indeed we were ever acquainted with them.<sup>3</sup> For the translations usually fall so far short of the spirit of the original, that it may be said to be almost another work. *Wilhelm Meister* has brought us much nearer to a knowledge of Goethe, than any work of that admirable author which has appeared in English dress, and it is really gratifying to the feelings of an Englishman, to hear and read with what reverence his favourite part is spoken by one of the greatest geniuses that ever graced his country. The rapture with which Goethe speaks of *Shakespeare*, shows that he is really worthy of that high esteem in which he is held—all ages and all countries are happy to bear testimony of the worth of our immortal Bard. The character of *Hamlet* has fallen more particularly under the hand of Goethe—and as it will be more acceptable to hear the author's own words, I have selected a few passages out of numerous other ones, which shew the opinions of the Germans on that highly drawn character.

"In the present dearth of theatrical news, I hope these extracts will be acceptable, but to those who have the books themselves from which these are taken, I can only say they must read and admire. I am, *Mr. Drama*, Yours respectfully, *Philo Kean*."

The critic then quotes the famous passages from Vol. II, pp. 72 ff. and 165 ff.<sup>4</sup> An amusing typographical error occurs in the quotation of Carlyle's statement of the "disturbances in Norway, the war with Young Fortinbras," etc. The critic has it, "the disturbances in Norway, the bear with Young Fortinbras."

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Beer's *English Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 171, and Carlyle's preface (p. vii) to his *German Romance*, 1827.

<sup>4</sup> The passages are those treating of the composition and plot of the drama, and particularly the conception of Hamlet's character. They are found in Book V, chapters 4 and 5. Lack of space prevents their quotation in this note.